



# PROTECT *your* HEALTH!

## FIVE WAYS TO BUILD A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM



Even though most people know a good night's sleep is good for their health, an astounding 40 percent of us get only six hours or less each night on a regular basis. With too little sleep we feel more sluggish, eat more than we should, and are less productive than if we'd gotten enough. More importantly, too little sleep weakens the immune system. That's because when we sleep, our bodies repair and restore themselves. Without enough of it, we become targets for all kinds of sickness.

Dr. Tina Waters is a neurologist at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic's Sleep Disorders Center. She says lack of sleep triggers one of the most severe health hazards: inflammation, which is at the root of things like heart disease and arthritis as well as trouble fighting off colds and flu.

"When individuals are getting less than, let's say, five to six hours of sleep," explains Dr. Waters, "it's been found that your pro-inflammatory markers are elevated. And when some of these pro-inflammatory markers are elevated, you're at higher risk of developing other issues."

To prove this point, researchers studied two groups of men. One group slept four hours a night, and the other slept eight. After one week, they compared blood samples from each group. The men who slept eight hours a night had twice the flu-fighting antibodies of the men who had only slept four hours.

In other studies, scientists discovered that when we are sleep-deprived, our number of T-cells diminishes. Dr. Waters explains the importance of T-cells.

"You need T-cells in your body, absolutely. They're your body's first defense of getting rid of the bugs, germs, bacteria, viruses, fungi, any of those infections that you have. That's your body's first response."

It's one thing to choose sleep deprivation because you're working or playing too much. On the other hand, insomnia is entirely different. Insomnia occurs when a person allocates enough time to get the proper amount of sleep, but fails to do so because of trouble falling asleep, or waking up and not being able to get back to sleep.

People who struggle with insomnia are often tempted to reach for a sleeping pill. But doctors say there are other things they should try first.

SLEEP

“These sleeping pills in general have some long-term effects that we’re still learning about,” says Dr. Waters. “Memory issues could develop as a result of taking these medicines long-term. In some instances, they could make the underlying medical condition worse.”

### REDUCE OR ELIMINATE CAFFEINE, ESPECIALLY IN THE AFTERNOON

Instead of popping a pill, cut back on, or better yet, cut out caffeine, which is a stimulant.

“Caffeine is in all sorts of things,” states Dr. Waters, “so it doesn’t necessarily have to be coffee. It could be tea. Green tea has caffeine in it. Your Monster energy drinks, your Five-Hour energy, any of these, chocolate.”

### STOP SMOKING

Like caffeine, nicotine is also a stimulant, so stop smoking.

### NO NAPS

In addition to caffeine and cigarettes, just say “no” to that nap on the couch.

“A lot of people think, ‘Oh, I didn’t sleep well at night, I’m going to take a nap in the afternoon.’ Well, that’s just reducing your body’s drive to want to sleep at nighttime.”

### NO LIGHTS

At least an hour before bedtime, dim the lights and stop looking at anything that emits light, like the television or the computer.

“Ultimately, when we get stimulated with light, it reduces our body’s melatonin production,” explains Dr. Waters, “and we need melatonin to help us fall asleep at night, and to maintain sleep the majority of the nighttime.”

### EXERCISE

Regular exercise will also have you sleeping like a baby.

“The exercise has a neurochemical impact in improving your sleep,” says Dr. Waters.

### DON’T EAT FOOD OR DRINK ALCOHOL BEFORE BED

Don’t eat within a few hours before bedtime. Stay away from alcohol before bed, too. Food and alcohol will knock you out, but will disturb your sleep, so you wake up later and create difficulty falling back to sleep. Also, spicy foods can interfere with a good night’s sleep because they can cause heartburn. Speaking of food, obesity itself can interfere with a good night’s sleep, so losing weight will help immensely.

## Fact Resources

Tina Waters, M.D.

is a board-certified neurologist with a license to practice medicine in Ohio. She is affiliated with the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Waters specializes in sleep medicine and sleep disorders, a subspecialty certification by the Board of Internal Medicine, Otolaryngology, Pediatrics, or Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Waters received her medical degree in 2008 from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in Cincinnati, Ohio. She completed her residency program in adult neurology in 2009 at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, then continued with a fellowship program in sleep medicine at the University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Help CBN continue to provide the latest information on topics that will enrich and encourage your daily life by joining the 700 Club for \$20/month!

Log on to  
[www.CBN.com](http://www.CBN.com) or  
call (800) 759-0700.

**BECOME A PARTNER TODAY!**

The opinions presented here or on The 700 Club do not necessarily represent the views of CBN.

**EH01**

Copyright © 2014 by  
The Christian Broadcasting  
Network, Inc.  
977 Centerville Turnpike  
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

## MAKE YOUR BEDROOM COOL AND DARK

You'll sleep better in a room that is dark. Sometimes this is impossible, in which case, you should invest in a good sleep mask. Your body temperature should be low, so while a soothing bath or shower before bedtime is relaxing, make sure it's not too hot. Likewise, exercising will help you sleep better, but when we work out it raises our body temperature, so make sure to finish your exercise at least two hours before bed so your body temperature can return to normal.

## RELAX YOUR MIND

Also before bed, don't do things like pay bills, worry about tomorrow, or argue with your spouse, because these types of behavior cause wakefulness. Instead, read a chapter in the Bible. Meditating on Scripture will calm you down, and it's a great way to end the day.

## ONLY SLEEP IN THE BEDROOM

Turn your bedroom into an authentic sleep chamber. That is, construct your bedroom so that the only thing your brain associates with that area is sleep. That means no television, computer or work in the bedroom at all, so you don't engage in those activities at any time when you are near the bed. This will train your mind to enter into sleep mode when it's in the bedroom if sleep is the only thing that occurs in that space.

## WRITE IT DOWN

If you find your mind racing when you are trying to sleep, get out of bed and go into another room. Then write on a piece of paper all the things you are thinking about—whether it's problems or a to-do list. After you've moved your troubles from your mind to the tangible paper, leave it in the other room and go back to bed. You will likely experience a newfound sense of peace, because you have subconsciously transferred your concerns from inside your head onto a piece of paper. Therefore, you are no longer responsible for remembering them or dealing with them right now. You can rest in the knowledge that they will be safely waiting for you, on the paper in the next room, to deal with them when you wake up. If you find your problems continue to grip your mind, you may be suffering from depression, which interferes with a good night's sleep. Consider getting to the root of your problems by seeing a psychologist or therapist, preferably one that approaches solutions with a biblical understanding. Try to avoid medical professionals who only want to treat the problem with drugs in the absence of counseling.

## STICK TO THE SAME BEDTIME AND WAKE-TIME

Getting the right amount of sleep often hinges in sticking to a consistent bedtime and rising time. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekends. Your body needs an established rhythm of sleep.

## SLEEP APNEA

If you've tried everything, and you still feel exhausted during the day, you might be one of the millions of Americans who have sleep apnea. It can damage your health and many people don't even know they have it.

Sleep apnea occurs when your airway closes and opens at intervals throughout the night, so you never get the deep, restorative sleep you need.

Dr. Waters explains how to tell if you have sleep apnea.

“Common symptoms of sleep apnea are snoring: loud, disruptive snoring, certainly if there’s someone telling you, you’re choking and gasping, and actually stopping breathing while sleeping,” she continued, “Another symptom is unrefreshing sleep: when you’re waking up, let’s say you’ve allowed yourself eight hours of sleep, but you wake up and feel like you were hit by a truck, (as if) you barely slept at all.”

People who suspect they may have sleep apnea should ask their doctor to be tested at a sleep center.

Tom Kramer was diagnosed with sleep apnea two years ago. Since then he’s worn a C-PAP machine every night while he sleeps. He says thanks to that little device, he feels like a new man.

“I think my immune system is much better,” he says. “I don’t get colds and sinus infections like I used to. I don’t wake up with a sore throat and a dry throat. That’s a big thing, too.”

The C-PAP machine blows a gentle stream of air to prevent the throat from closing, so you don’t wake up.

“I have more energy,” Tom says, “I’ve lost over 20 pounds just being on the C-PAP.”

When it comes to strengthening your body’s ability to fight illness, take a close look at your sleep. Make sure you’re getting enough of it. If not, stay away from sleeping pills, and instead, choose natural remedies for insomnia. On the other hand, if you think you spend enough time sleeping, but still don’t feel well-rested, get tested for sleep apnea. If the test comes back positive, using a C-PAP machine will have you feeling better right away.

Note: Before beginning any new health regimen, it is important to consult your family physician or health care professional first. The information given in this publication is for your consideration. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Before starting or stopping any exercise routine or nutritional supplementation, please consult your family physician or health care professional about any contraindications that would make doing so inadvisable. This information is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. The readers should regularly consult a physician in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.